

MTM/VF EIS

Community Narrative: Carcassone, Kentucky

Interviewer: We are good to go, I apologize. O.K. First question, could you tell me a little bit about yourself and your family and how you came to live in Carcassone?

Resident: I was raised near here, about 3 or 4 miles and then married my wife. We live on her home place and when I came back out of the service, we moved in here to take care of her mother and lived out her mother's life in this house.

Interviewer: O.K. How many years has that been then?

Resident: About 33, 34, something like that.

Interviewer: O.K., so you probably moved in there in the early 60's, mid-60's?

Resident: Early 70s.

Interviewer: Early 70s, I do my math right, early 70s, right. Um, so basically your connections to the area are through your wife?

Resident: Right

Interviewer: O.K., Now your wife, I assume that she is still residing there?

Resident: Yes she is, her mother passed away a little over a year ago and we are still living here.

Interviewer: O.K., Sorry to hear about that. Um, some questions about your quality of life, now we are looking at a time period for the Mountain Top Mining. When did, is Mountain Top Mining currently being conducted in the Carcassone area?

Resident: Right, about probably maybe a mile from where we live, approximately I would say.

Interviewer: O.K., do you know when that type of operation started in that area?

Resident: Well, they have been strip-mining here ever since we have been in this area, but and they strip-mined on our property around 10 years ago, so it's been going on 15 - 20 years in this area.

Interviewer: O.K. In terms of your quality of life, what do you like most about the Carcassone area?

Resident: Quiet, peaceful place. A good place to raise a family. We raised our children here and have some of our grandchildren here with us now, close to us.

Interviewer: O.K. How many people live in the Carcassone area. If you would say. I know it

sounds like a very rural community, but how many families do you think live there right now?

Resident: Oh, probably 50 or 75.

Interviewer: O.K. In terms of what do you like most about Carcassone, the question I just asked you, have you observed any changes to those things that you enjoy in Carcassone, in terms of natural environment, the local environment, or any types of services, or like through government services or schools, or anything that you notice that has changed over the years that you may perceived has occurred form the presence of mining?

Resident: No, not in this area.

Interviewer: O.K. In terms of the population, have you noticed any changes in the local population? Has it increased or decreased?

Resident: I would say it has decreased because when they stripped most of the land here, it is harder to find good water now than what it was 25 to 30 years ago.

Interviewer: O.K. What is the water quality like? I assume you have on lot your own well there. Is that correct Emory?

Resident: Because when they stripped they drilled this well and we appear to have plenty of water, but it has to be filtered, treated in order to use it and then it's not the best quality water.

Interviewer: O.K. Was that something with the water quality? How would you describe the quality and quantity of your water when you first moved there?

Resident: When we first moved here, we had one drill well, one dug well, and we got our drinking water from a what we called a coal bank which was a mine, probably 200 feet back in, used to get their house coal from. And we walled that up and made us a reservoir and that was excellent water. Had to do very little treating of it and had more than what 3 or 4 families could use.

Interviewer: How is that source used today?

Resident: That one that we had?

Interviewer: Right, the reservoir.

Resident: They stripped that same of coal so it don't longer exist.

Interviewer: O.K. O.K. So you are saying that the population you feel is actually decreased?

Resident: I would say it probably has.

Interviewer: And do you have any reasoning or any idea why that population has decreased?

Resident: Well, the main thing is because of water. The difficulty in finding a suitable water for families.

Interviewer: O.K.

Resident: And jobs also.

Interviewer: I was just gonna ask is any of that related to employment opportunities in your area? What is the major employer for the Carcassone area for the residents that live there.

Resident: Right now I would say it is geared to the mining business other than, well we have a lot of teachers, doctors, things like that lives in this area now.

Interviewer: And where do those teachers and doctors work? What is the local area that they work in or maybe facilities that they worked out of, where are they located?

Resident: Well, I have a daughter and a son that are RNs and they both work in medical facilities in Perry County.

Interviewer: O.K. And how far away is Perry County?

Resident: Well, it is only about 3 to 4 miles from where we live but they drive probably . . . my daughter drives 8 or 10 miles and my son drives about 20 and we have a doctor and a dentist . . . two doctors and a dentist in the family and I would have to sit down and count all the teachers and they teach and lecture at Perry County in [Ivecove] which is approximately each one 20 some miles from here.

Interviewer: O.K. So basically the services that the families in Carcassone they really have to travel some distance to get to those services or employment opportunities. Is that correct?

Resident: Any employment that anyone does, they have to travel out of here if they can make a living on it. I worked for a natural gas company which mine was probably the closest of any mileage to it and I only drove probably 6 or 7 miles at the most for 30 years that I worked.

Interviewer: O.K., so you are retired right now?

Resident: Yes, I retired a little over a year ago.

Interviewer: O.K., well hopefully you are enjoying your retirement, I'm sure you are.

Resident: I am.

Interviewer: In terms of the future of Carcassone, do you and your wife plan to continue living and residing in Carcassone?

Resident: Yes sir.

Interviewer: And do you have any . . . based upon your past perceptions and experienced in that area . . . how do you perceive, or what do you think the future of Carcassone is?

Resident: Well, they are continuing mining, from what I hear, they are gonna come back to just behind our property. I don't know if we will let them get on our property or not, but they will be right behind it and it's gonna be Mountain Top Removal I understand. I don't know what will be added to that or how it is gonna effect our water or anything like that.

Interviewer: So you are, right now, you are probably anticipating the mining companies to come in very close to your property, if not on it, possibly, but the future of Carcassone in terms of your perception is unknown at this time.

Resident: Right, because on depending on what seam of coal they would go after. We sit and most of Carcassone, most of the people in the Carcassone area sit on the on the sediment coal or just about it.

Interviewer: O.K.

Resident: They have gone a seam or 200 which would be completely underneath where everyone is. If they did that, then it would really hurt the area.

Interviewer: Now, if they would do that, would that impact your decision to stay in Carcassone?

Resident: Not if they didn't get on my land and didn't destroy my water where I couldn't find it, because when they did the mining on my property, they drilled one well 300 and some feet deep I believe it was and didn't get water. And the other one was around 200 something that we have for water, so I don't know if they come back and strip more, I don't know how it is gonna be to get water and we don't have any local water systems that's come in where we could get water from.

Interviewer: Right, everything is basically on-lot type of water systems, private water systems.

Resident: Closest public water system would be three miles, I would say.

Interviewer: O.K., so it's a little distance away from where you are at right now?

Resident: Yes, and no plans for it to come this way, not that I have heard of.

Interviewer: Have you know any local residents that have had to move out of the Carcassone area because of mining?

Resident: I have known ones that they purchase their property and the place where they lived, it was all leveled. Some of them went back later on and built on that property where they had mined and some of them put trailers on it, but several in the Carcassone area had to move when they were doing the stripping in that area.

Interviewer: Do you know where those families may have moved?

Resident: No, I don't.

Interviewer: O.K. You don't know if they were able to move locally or if they had to travel far away outside the area to find new residents?

Resident: I would say most of them moved locally, because most of the people in this area are older people that have lived here most of their lives.

Interviewer: O.K., so they have ties to the area then I would assume.

Resident: Right, it would be the majority of the young people that stay in this area either go into the education or medical field or something of that line.

Interviewer: O.K. What are the benefits . . . have there been any benefits from mining being present in the Carcassone community?

Resident: Not on my property.

Interviewer: O.K. And you don't perceive any other types of benefits that they have been able to provide to the local community or at least the community has been able to achieve from the presence of mining?

Resident: Not really that much, no. Some of the land is more level now than what it was, but the majority of it isn't worth anything as far as doing any kind of farming on it or anything.

Interviewer: In terms of that level ground, did you see any potential uses or reuse of that property other than mining operations? The leveled areas?

Resident: Yes, a person could raise cattle or something of that on it. It takes several years to get a good stand of grass to do that for my area here they had promised us some level land and we don't have any. It's far worse than what it was when they started on it.

Interviewer: So basically, your perception is that any reuse of that property would be some type of agricultural use?

Resident: Right.

Interviewer: O.K. In terms of the relationship that the mining company has had with the local

citizens, including yourself, what public information was made available to you regarding the introduction of the presence of surface mining in the Carcassone area? Did they make any contact or have any correspondence with you?

Resident: Yes, two or three different times, they had a representative from a coal company come and talk to us and we were one of the last ones to give in to agree to let them use our property as a strip mine. And that was after we were promised a lot of things which we did not receive.

Interviewer: O.K. And basically those contacts were made to discuss purchasing the property for their mining use, is that correct?

Resident: No, they weren't pressuring it, they were just getting the coal off of it. Paying us royalty for . . .

Interviewer: I see, O.K.

Resident: Mining

Interviewer: So that is what they made contact for. To discuss the

Resident: Right, for the removal of the coal.

Interviewer: O.K. have you had, is your property in terms of structurally, have had any impacts from any mining activities?

Resident: Not right around the house, now the other property, where they did mine that most of it is steep. It's, well you might be able to use it for a pasture, but the only way you could mow it or clear it would be by hand or dozer, so there is really not too many benefits after they got through.

Interviewer: O.K. And in terms of the coal company making any contact with you, you haven't had them . . . uh, there hasn't been a need for them to come out and look at any possible damage that may have occurred from any types of mining activities, such as blasting, have you had any problems such as that?

Resident: When they were stripping, yes, we did.

Interviewer: Could you elaborate on that for me please?

Resident: We had things knocked off the wall and broken foundations, concrete blocks, it was cracked and this area, several have had that.

Interviewer: In your opinion, that was caused by the mining operations?

Resident: I have no doubt it was. The blast.

Interviewer: O.K. and have the mining representatives come out, company come out to your property to do any assessments of that type of damage?

Resident: Not since they quit the permit they had on our property in the other area which that has been close to 10 years ago.

Interviewer: O.K. And did they publish the mining permits in the local paper?

Resident: Right.

Interviewer: O.K., I guess that is required by law, right, state law?

Resident: Right. After they complete the mining, then they go through several phases before their bond is released for it. And I would say, I am not sure, but I would say that bond has been released on this property where they mined here, or it is awful close to it.

Interviewer: Those are all my questions, I had a few more questions, but your indication to me that you lived there basically for most of your life, at least with your wife and you have no future decision to leave the area, so we had some other questions regarding your decision to leave the area and go to another area, but it sounds like you are planning to stay there for now.

Resident: I'm an old regular Baptist Minister and church in this area where I can, so I have no intention of leaving this area.

Interviewer: O.K. Super. Well, Resident those are the questions. Again, we really do appreciate your time and interest in speaking to us, and again, your name and any other personal information will remain confidential, and this interview that we have conducted today will remain anonymous as well.

Resident: I appreciate that.

Interviewer: O.K. One last thing, do you have access to the Internet?